



#13/15

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Hugh R. Sharkey et al.                      Art Unit : 3739  
Serial No. : 09/884,859                                      Examiner : Kenneth G. Schopfer  
Filed : June 18, 2001  
Title : METHOD OF TREATING INTERVERTEBRAL DISC TISSUE EMPLOYING  
ATTACHMENT MECHANISM (As amended)

Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

RESPONSE

In response to the action mailed September 12, 2002, please amend the application as follows:

In the title

Please amend the title to read --METHOD OF TREATING INTERVERTEBRAL DISC TISSUE EMPLOYING ATTACHMENT MECHANISM--.

In the specification:

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 6, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraphs:

Also according to this embodiment, the distal portion of the guide wire includes a spring coil to adjust flexibility of the guide wire. A forming ribbon may be incorporated in the distal portion of the guide wire to support the spring coil. The spring coil may be fully coated with Teflon or other biocompatible materials. The distal portion of the guide wire may be tapered to a smaller diameter toward the distal end.

Still according to this embodiment, the distal portion of the guide wire has a distal tip at the extremity of the distal portion of the guide wire. The distal portion of the guide wire may have one or more flat sides. The distal tip may be configured to be non-piercing through an annulus fibrosus, for example, including a blunt tip or a rolling ball tip. The distal tip may also include a locking mechanism for securing the guide wire within the selected section of the intervertebral disc, such as within an intradiscal section of the disc adjacent an inner wall of an annulus of the disc. The locking mechanism may include a retractable hook or a plurality of

RECEIVED  
MAR 19 2003  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

B1